

PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

**§ 435.40 Purpose of procurement standards.**

Sections 435.41 through 435.48 set forth standards for use by recipients in establishing procedures for the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property and other services with Federal funds. These standards are furnished to ensure that such materials and services are obtained in an effective manner and in compliance with the provisions of applicable Federal statutes and executive orders. SSA may impose no additional procurement standards or requirements upon recipients, unless specifically required by Federal statute or executive order or approved by OMB.

**§ 435.41 Recipient responsibilities.**

The standards contained in this section do not relieve the recipient of the contractual responsibilities arising under its contract(s). The recipient is the responsible authority, without recourse to SSA, regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in support of an award or other agreement. This includes disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violation of statute are to be referred to such Federal, State or local authority as may have proper jurisdiction.

**§ 435.42 Codes of conduct.**

The recipient must maintain written standards of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated in this section, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award. The officers, employees, and

agents of the recipient may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to subagreements. However, recipients may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the recipient.

**§ 435.43 Competition.**

All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. The recipient must be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements. Awards must be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations must clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder or offeror must fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the recipient. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the recipient's interest to do so.

**§ 435.44 Procurement procedures.**

(a) All recipients must establish written procurement procedures. These procedures must provide, at a minimum, that paragraphs (a)(1), (2), and (3) of this section apply.

(1) Recipients avoid purchasing unnecessary items.

(2) Where appropriate, an analysis is made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement for the Federal Government.

(3) Solicitations for goods and services provide for all of the following: